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(74) Agents: DOWNING, Michael, Philip et al.; Fry Heath & Spence, The Old College, 53 High Street, Horley, Surrey RH6 7BN (GB).

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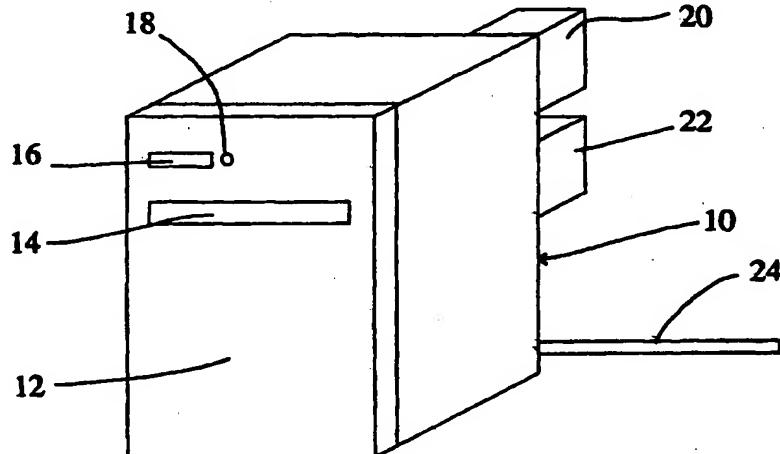
(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): EXPRESS-PAX LIMITED [GB/GB]; Arle Court, Cheltenham Studios, Hatherley Lane, Cheltenham GL51 6PN (GB).

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— With international search report.

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: POSTAL BOX



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(57) Abstract: A postal storage box comprises an interior compartment (10) accessible via an aperture, a moveable cover (12) over the aperture, and a lock adapted to retain the cover (12) in a closed position or allow the cover (12) to be opened, a control means (22) able to control the lock state, a memory element adapted to store box state information, and a means for writing box state information to the memory element, wherein the control means (22) control the lock state on the basis of the box state information. The box preferably also includes means for inputting parcel information (16) such as a bar code reader, or the box could communicate (18) with a handheld unit carried by the courier by IR, radio, or other links. The means for writing box state information is preferably controllable remotely, for example via a modem link (24) or via the Internet. It is also preferable for at least part of the box state information to be available over the modem or Internet link (24). Thus, the box controls delivery through any combination of package content, current box contents, courier, box location, box identification, customer identification, delivery company and date.

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

— *Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.*

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern'l application No
PCT/GB 00/02119A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 A47G29/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 A47G

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|----------|---|-----------------------|
| X | FR 2 563 987 A (SOCIÉTÉ DE DISTRIBUTION DE LA GRANDE BRASSERIE DE LILLE SA.) 15 November 1985 (1985-11-15) claims 1,4,7,10 | 1,2,4-6, 8-11,20 |
| X | US 5 774 053 A (PORTER) 30 June 1998 (1998-06-30) column 5, line 38 - line 60 column 4, line 16 - line 21 column 6, line 16 - line 33 column 7, line 51 - line 64 column 8, line 12 - line 22 | 1-6, 8-11,20 |

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
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- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- "&" document member of the same patent family

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| Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3018 | Authorized officer Beugeling, G |

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/GB 00/02119

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.: because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.: because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.: because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.

2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-11, 20

Remark on Protest

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
 No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-11, 20

Postal storage box with controlled lock state, respectively with means for communication with an external agency.

2. Claims: 12-17

Postal storage box with means for communicating to a parcel.

3. Claims: 18, 19

Set of postal boxes each arranged to communicate with others of the set.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Intern [REDACTED] Application No

PCT/GB 00/02119

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | | Publication date |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------|
| FR 2563987 | A 15-11-1985 | NONE | | |
| US 5774053 | A 30-06-1998 | AU 2823497 A | 19-11-1997 | |
| | | EP 0920686 A | 09-06-1999 | |
| | | WO 9741542 A | 06-11-1997 | |